



DESERT LOCUST UPDATE

FAO Emergency Centre for Locust Operations



(17 December 2003)



General Situation as of 17 December 2003 Forecast until mid-January 2004

Swarms have started to form in Mauritania where breeding continues in many areas. Although locust numbers are declining in Mali and Niger, swarms can still form and move towards North West Africa. A swarm arrived on the Red Sea coast in Sudan from nearby outbreak areas and hoppers are hatching and forming bands in Saudi Arabia.

Swarms started to form in **Mauritania** during the first decade of December when teams saw 11 immature swarms in northern Trarza (Aguilal Faye area). Three other swarms flew over Nouakchott on 4-6 December and one swarm was seen southwest of Akjoujt. More laying and hatching has occurred in northern Trarza and in Tiris-Zemmour (north of Zouerate). Hopper bands are forming there as well as in parts of Inchiri and southern Adrar. In southern **Morocco**, mature groups of adults are present from the Mauritanian border to Bir Anzarane. Hatching is in progress near Tichla where small bands are forming and hoppers have reached the fourth instar. A similar situation may be in progress in western **Algeria**. Low temperatures will delay locust maturation in northern Mauritania and in adjacent areas of Morocco and Algeria. Ground control operations treated 19,200 ha (full cover and barrier) in Mauritania and 2,352 ha in Morocco during the first decade of December.

Although locust infestations are declining in **Mali** and **Niger**, groups of hoppers and young adults remain in Tamesna and the eastern Adrar des Iforas (Mali) and in the southeastern Air Mountains (Niger). Bands are forming in Mali where one swarm has been reported so far. During the first decade of December, ground operations treated 9,642 ha in Mali and 1,680 ha in Niger. Locust numbers will continue to decline in both countries as groups and swarms form and move towards the north and northwest.

In **Sudan**, a mature swarm was first reported on the Red Sea coast on 10 December north of Port Sudan where it was seen laying. Solitary breeding is in progress in the Tokar Delta, and control operations declined against hopper and adult groups in the summer breeding areas in Northern Kordofan but continue near the Atbara River where fledging is in progress. More adults, groups and a few swarms are expected to appear on the Red Sea coastal plains and lay eggs that will hatch in the coming weeks. Some more groups and swarms may cross the Red Sea to **Saudi Arabia** where additional adult groups were seen laying eggs on the coastal plains between Jeddah and Yenbo. New reports indicate that some groups moved east and south into the Asir Mountains in late November and early December, reaching the interior north and east of Medina and east of Taif where they laid eggs. This is very unusual at this time of year. Hatching has already started in some places and hoppers are forming bands. Control operations treated 3,565 ha during the first week of December in Saudi Arabia.

The FAO Desert Bulletin is issued monthly, supplemented by Updates during periods of increased Desert Locust activity, and is distributed by fax, e-mail, FAO pouch and airmail by the Locusts and Other Migratory Pests Group, AGP Division, FAO, 00100 Rome, Italy. It is also available on the Internet.

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The most up-to-date information on the situation and photos are available on the Internet (www.fao.org/news/global/locusts/locuhome.htm) as well as maps of the latest infestations (193.43.36.11/mapper).